

CONTEMPT FOR FOREIGNERS.

Reasons Which the Chinese Have For Despising All Aliens.

Special correspondence of The Florida Star.

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 22.—When we regard the Chinaman with our American eyes we are apt to consider him a bundle of contradictions, hopelessly benighted and behind the age. We fail to remember or we disregard the fact that thousands of years ago, when our own ancestors were wallowing in the depths of barbarism, without even the rudiments of civilization, the Chinese possessed a high degree of culture. Chinese philosophers were busy constructing codes of ethics when Europe knew no other law than that of might, and Chinese engineers built the great wall when European science was a thing unborn. Though they have reverted from such high civilization to a condition of almost primeval barbarity, superstition and cruelty, it is well to remember these facts and to weigh them before judging the Chinese.

From the days of the earliest European the almost unanimous opinion of writers has been that the Chinaman does not think as we do. Our notions of right and wrong do not fit Chinese minds, while what to them is correct and moral appears to us entirely wrong. It may help somewhat to explain Chinese animosity toward foreigners to look at a few of our salient points from a Chinese standpoint.

To begin with, no people on earth has stronger home ties than the Chinese, and they cannot understand foreign love of travel. Their dearest pleasure is to stay at home and worship at the ancestral graves, and their highest aim is to possess so high a degree of affluence as to render further exertion unnecessary. They cannot, therefore, understand the restlessness and ceaseless activity of foreigners. Why do not the "foreign devils" stay at home, where they belong? The ignorant Chinaman is convinced that we have no ancestors, else we would not leave their graves to visit foreign lands. Although Chinamen are driven by necessity to gain their livelihood elsewhere, and are found in every land under the sun, their dearest wish always remains to get back to China. It may seem grotesque to Americans, and yet it is an actual fact that many exiled Chinamen, unfeeling as their exterior appears, die of homesickness. They do not, therefore, travel for pleasure, and are content to reside where their ancestors abode.

Above all things, the foreign ladies who visit his land are incomprehensible to a Chinaman, for very few Chinese women ever leave the confines of China. Foreign women are in many ways a riddle to the Chinese. He thinks them immodest, because they do not wear trousers, and considers their going about with the men to inspect his home a most indelicate proceeding. It is not safe for foreign women to go through the native quarters of some Chinese cities—Canton, for instance. They are pelted with refuse and continually insulted by the low class natives. Their animosity is especially directed toward women with blond hair, for these are to them a particularly dangerous class of "foreign devils."

The Chinese are apt to consider us most rude, because, either from disregard or ignorance of the Chinese code of etiquette, we constantly violate his dearest traditions. What we call frankness is to them rudeness, and our habit of saying what we mean is most disagreeable. Chinamen have been called by foreigners flars by instinct; but this view is mild when we consider that Chinese contempt of foreigners is so great that they reserve their most artistic lies for their compatriots and treat us only to their clumsiest.

When one Chinaman detects another in a lie, he is too diplomatic to tell him so directly; whereas we earn his contempt of our stupidity and rudeness by bluntly exposing his falsehood. To deal correctly with this phase of intercourse with Chinamen we must meet him on his own ground, and not tell him that we know him to be lying, but gently insinuate that he has not succeeded in deceiving us.

The idea so generally prevalent in the United States that the Chinaman is wanting in natural sense is a grievous mistake. He is as shrewd as a Yankee, as cunning as a Scot in spite of his superstitions and as suspicious as an American Indian.

In all the efforts to convert him to Christianity the main difficulty has been to convince him of the disinterestedness of missionary effort. He simply cannot be persuaded that the Christian man or woman has left home on the other side of the ocean in order to better the condition of John Chinaman's soul. He wants to know what earthly reward the missionary expects to get, and when he is told of the glories of heaven to be awarded to the true believer and propagator of the faith, white or yellow, he meets the statement with an unbelieving grunt.

Self satisfaction is one of the leading traits of the Chinese mind. Chinamen are serenely confident that nothing outside of China can quite equal their country, and this holds true even when they are sunk in the depths of misery and degradation. They call it impu-

lence in the white man or woman to attempt to wean them from their ancient faiths, and their animosity and vindictiveness are aroused thereby.

Probably the greatest difficulty in reaching Chinese hearts with the light of faith is missionary ignorance of their language, or, rather, languages. Many years ago, a Jesuit missionary said, "I believe the devil invented the Chinese language to keep the missionary out." There are as many different languages and dialects in China as there are days in the year, with possibly some districts not yet heard from. It is a positive fact that frequently men from different parts of the same province cannot understand each other and must have recourse to some outside dialect in order to converse.

The leading languages of the empire are the mandarin, which is the official language, and the Canton, Amoy, Fuchau, Swatow, and Hing-Hoa, spoken by the cities of these names and the districts tributary to them. Besides these, there are the innumerable local dialects referred to above. In order to do successful work in his chosen field, a foreign missionary must speak at least the colloquial dialect and the mandarin tongue, leaving other linguistic difficulties to be dealt with as they arise.

Space is too limited here to enter upon a discussion of the Chinese language and grammar. There is a Chinese grammar, but what it is and how it is constructed are mysteries to the ordinary Caucasian mind. One well known anecdote to illustrate the difficulties of this tongue and its pronunciation: A young missionary carefully prepared his first sermon, under the supervision of a native teacher, and delivered it without, as he supposed, a single error. Judge of his mortification to learn afterward that throughout the whole sermon he had used the word "pig" instead of "Lord!" There is an endless number of such obstacles in the way of learning Chinese, which is generally conceded to be the most difficult language in the world.

This brings us back to our original conception—Chinese opinion and estimation of foreigners. To the mind of the native any one who does not speak his language is, ipso facto, a barbarian and to be despised as such. When our devoted missionaries, through years of hard study and research, learn their native tongue they may, perhaps, succeed in changing native opinion of them and become "foreign gentlemen," instead of barbarians or "foreign devils." But this is only one of the numerous difficulties to be overcome. Although China is not, generally speaking, a gloomy land, and in their own peculiar ways the Chinese manage to enjoy life, they do not laugh aloud; and our frank expressions of mirth are to them unendurable evidences of ill breeding. You need not ask a Chinaman to give a reason for this, or for anything else. He will simply tell you that it is so, and let it go at that. He does not trouble, usually, to think out any reason for anything. And yet some of the subtleties of the Chinese mind are beyond imagination, as many missionaries have discovered to their undoing. The difficulty lies in knowing whom to trust.

During the riots those pupils whom they have thought most sincere and devoted have proved the most treacherous and devoid of gratitude. Yet here again comes in the contradiction, inevitable in speaking of Chinese matters—many times have Chinese converts sacrificed their lives in defense of their teachers.

Very often foreigners unwittingly commit serious breaches of etiquette which would render a Chinaman liable to severe punishment. They escape owing to their foreign citizenship, which tends to inflame still further the Chinese mind against the "foreign devils" and makes him long for the day when he will be able to drive them all into the sea. CHARLES E. ROBINSON.

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Lot 25, Joynerville addition to Titusville, section 3, township 22 south, range 35 east, sold for taxes July 4th, 1898, unless good cause be shown to me on or before September 11th 1900, why I should not issue said deed. This August 10th, 1900.

[SEAL, ET. CT.] A. A. STEWART, Clerk of Circuit Court Brevard County, Florida.

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